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NEWS RELEASE

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June 19, 2007

Ministry of Advanced Education
Ministry of Health

B.C. INVESTS $9 MILLION IN RESIDENTIAL CARE TRAINING

VANCOUVER – The Province is investing almost $9 million in new student spaces, loan reduction and enhanced training for residential care aides and home support workers at B.C. public post-secondary institutions, Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell announced today while touring the construction site of Vancouver Community College's new campus where 16 of the seats will be offered.

"This year, we're investing $1.68 million in 213 new student spaces for residential care aides and home support workers to ensure that students interested in this area as a career have access to the training they need to be successful," said Coell. "By expanding education opportunities in the residential care field we are we are ensuring excellent health services are available to all British Columbians."

The 213 new seats will be split among eight post-secondary institutions across the province. Sixteen of the seats have been reserved for Aboriginal students, as part of the ministry's commitment to increase participation by this group in career-related education programs.

"Increasing spaces to train additional care workers supports the Province's commitment to building 5,000 net new beds and units for seniors by the end of 2008," said Health Minister George Abbott. "More health-care workers in a home support capacity or residential care facility will help meet the needs of our increasing senior population."

The Province is also increasing financial support by $6.8 million for students enrolled in residential care aide and home support worker programs through a two-year pilot project that will extend eligibility for loan reduction. The student loan reduction program is usually only available to students enrolled in post-secondary education programs of two years or more. Care worker programs are typically less than two years.

"On average, students in the residential health-care field owe $4,000 in B.C. student loans. We're reducing these loans by $2,500 per student to encourage more people to take this kind of training," said Coell. "The Ministry of Advanced Education is doing its part to meet the province's future demand for home support workers."

Another $492,609 in one-time funding has been provided to five public post-secondary institutions to enhance their residential care worker training programs by revising curriculum, increasing program promotion and covering additional equipment costs.

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Since 2001-02, government has added 4,588 new student spaces to health care programs at post-secondary institutions across the province.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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BACKGROUNDER

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PROVINCIAL SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE WORKER PROGRAMS

New seats in 2007-08

- Okanagan College – 120 seats
- University College of the Fraser Valley – 10 seats
- Thompson Rivers University – 20 seats
- Selkirk College – 20 seats
- Northwest Community College – 11 seats
- Vancouver Community College – 16 seats
- Camosun College – eight seats for Aboriginal students
- Northern Lights College – eight seats for Aboriginal students

One-time funding support

- $79,000 to Vancouver Community College to lead a revision of the residential care aide curriculum, which will also be made available to private institutions.
- $25,000 to Douglas College to fund a multi-stakeholder pilot residential care aide project in the Fraser Health Region. The BC Care Providers Association will manage the project.
- $30,000 to Northwest Community College for equipment to support the residential care aide expansion.
- $160,000 to Okanagan College for equipment for two laboratories to support expansion in the residential care aide and licensed practical nurse program at the college.
- $70,000 to Okanagan College to support an additional intake of residential care aide students.
- $128,609 to Camosun College to support two additional intakes of residential care aide students.

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